Transformation Does Not Happen in Isolation, but in the Body of Christ

To have the opportunity to learn to live as the Lord Jesus lived and to grow to the measure of the stature of His fullness, God has provided in His plan the Church, which is the Body of Christ. (But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 1 Corinthians 12:18)

The Holy Scripture describes the Church of Christ as a family, with infants, children, and parents, where we live in close connection with one another and grow to become like the Lord.

The one born of God is placed in the family and in the school of Christ, to grow as a disciple until he reaches the stature of a mature man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. (And he gave some... pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints... till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13)

In the Church, we learn self-denial, humility, godliness, we learn to offer ourselves as servants to Christ, we learn to live in righteousness as He lived.

It is mandatory to live as He lived because only in this way can His character traits be imprinted in us, namely long-suffering, kindness, gentleness, love... and this can only be done in His school, which is the Church. (He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. 1 John 2:6)

Upon closer inspection, we can easily notice that all things related to man's salvation, from the new birth until we reach the stature of a mature man, are amazingly similar to the things we encounter in this short life on earth.

At birth, we witness the birth of the child, which is very similar to the new birth in the Kingdom of God.

The natural infant cannot choose in which family to grow up, those from whom he is born will be his family. For growth, the natural infant is fed with maternal milk. All things are absolutely new for the newborn child. He assimilates everything he sees and hears from his parents.

So it is with the one born again, he has spiritual parents who give birth to him through the Gospel. (For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I

beseech you, be ye followers of me. 1 Corinthians 4:15-16)

The parents of the one born again are those who feed him with spiritual milk as an infant. (And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat. 1 Corinthians 3:1)

He assimilates everything he sees and hears from his spiritual parents. (As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children. 1 Thessalonians 2:11)

A little later, the natural child follows enrollment in school and then, after a while, graduation... In this world, we cannot conceive that you can become a doctor without attending medical school and without teachers.

The same must happen with the spiritual child. You cannot reach the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ without being a disciple in His school. (But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school... Acts 19:9)

God gives us new birth, gives us the Holy Spirit to guide us, places us in His school where we have spiritual parents and teachers, to grow us according to the standard of His Kingdom.

He has given us everything we need to reach the stature for which we were created.(From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:16)

This school of disciples has a single purpose, for the disciple to reach the stature of the Teacher. We all must follow this school whose ultimate goal is to obtain the image of His Son in us. (The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. Luke 6:40)

The Son of God was sent by the heavenly Father to earth to establish the Church, which is the Body of Christ. He is the founder of the school of disciples, of the Church which He lovingly cares for. (And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Matthew 16:18; For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. Ephesians 5:29)

Lord Jesus had disciples, then He sent them into all the world, so that in turn they would make other disciples and enroll in the school of Christ those who wish to enter this school. (Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20)

We can take as an example the disciples of the Lord, but especially the apostle Paul. He dedicated his whole life to the service of the Church of Christ. He made disciples whom he taught to present them before God as perfect disciples in Christ. (Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. Colossians 1:28-29)

Only in His school can the relationships between disciples be adjusted until they reach full maturity and unity in all things, a unity that will also be found in His eternal Kingdom. (That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. John 17:21)

God places the members in the Body of Christ similarly to how He placed them in the human body; the heart in its place, the pancreas in its place, the nail in its place, each with its functions. (But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 1 Corinthians 12:18)

God does not place any member to grow outside the body, because separated from the body it can have neither life nor growth. We take as an example the kidneys, which cannot have life somewhere outside the body. They are in the body, closely connected to other members from which they receive and give further.

So it is with the members of the body of Christ. No member can grow alone, independent of the body. (Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility... and not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. Colossians 2:18-19)

Man must go through various trials so that at the end of the school he may acquire the character traits of Lord Jesus, to be found worthy to dwell with God and with all those who have graduated from this school of disciples and who have His traits imprinted in their character.

We will take as an example long-suffering. How can we have it imprinted in our character?

First, we will learn and assimilate the Lord's teaching regarding non-resistance, then when trials come upon us, we put it into practice by following in the footsteps of our spiritual parents who in turn follow in the footsteps of Lord Jesus. (And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Matthew 5:40-41)

Through this school of patience, which does its perfect work, each of us must pass, because only in this way can we reach the perfection of our character. (My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:2-4)

Those who are our parents will oversee how we apply the Lord's teaching in our daily lives. When our rights or what is ours are taken away, we must follow their example and that of the Lord and live as He lived.

Although God's plan is so clear, for most of us the Church, which is the Body of Christ, remains a great mystery, for many the church being just the place where believers gather for worship. (This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:32)

Through what we see today almost everywhere, we observe that Satan has managed to distort the role of the family, the significance of the Body of Christ. Through the false teaching that "salvation is limited to the forgiveness of sins" (a teaching that underlies religious organizations), he has deceived man that there is no need for discipleship and no need for a school of discipleship.

We can easily notice that discipleship to Christ is non-existent in today's religious organizations and almost no one believes that they must live as a disciple to reach the stature of their Teacher.

On the foundation of this false teaching, Satan has managed to deceive man that "the Church" is limited to worship in buildings equipped with preaching halls through which man is given only religious education.

First of all, he worked to replace spiritual parents/pastors who are responsible for raising their children, with preaching leaders, with servants dedicated only to worship programs, who are responsible only for institutionalized education and keeping the flock in a scattered form, not at all for raising children. (The wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. John 10:12)

In this way, the Church has become just a center of religious education, thus losing its purpose, no longer being the place intended for the growth and perfection of the saints in which the heavenly dominions look and marvel. (To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Ephesians 3:10-11)

If we look at today's religious organizations, we can easily see how well Satan has managed to deceive humanity, all practicing this institutionalized system of worship. From Catholics, Orthodox, Lutherans, to neo-Protestant movements, all follow the same pattern of organization, with buildings specially constructed for worship and preaching.

Thus, the one who wishes to live practically the life of discipleship, which involves a child-parent relationship, will find themselves in the ridiculous situation of not finding any spiritual parent. This happens because today in most gatherings spiritual parents are completely absent, as Paul was for Timothy, Titus, and and Onesimus, these being replaced with pastor-preachers, committee members, youth leaders... (Thou therefore, my son, be strong. 2 Timothy 2:1)

Spiritual parents are those who are placed/empowered by the Holy Spirit to ensure both the growth and protection of the children. (Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts 20:28)

For them to be able to do this, children must obey them in all things. (Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. 1 Peter 5:5)

Submission is described by Scripture as complete obedience without deviation to the right or to the left. (According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. Deuteronomy 17:11)

Only in this way can we reach our perfection, only if we obey our elder in all things. (Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account. Hebrews 13:17; And he gave some... pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints. Ephesians 4:11, 12)

It is good to understand the difference between education and growth under parental authority. Through preaching, we receive only teaching, not parental growth.

We can see how great the difference is when we look at an orphan child and a child who has parents. Both receive education. But for the child who has parents, besides education, they will be there to build his character, to encourage him in good things, and to correct him in what he does wrong. In contrast, for the orphan child, if he does wrong things, there will be no one there to correct him.

We must understand well that we will not be able to grow to reach the stature of the fullness of Christ if we do not have spiritual parents. In Paul's epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, the Holy Scripture gives us the apostle Paul as an example of a spiritual parent.

Even if Timothy and Titus had a high spiritual stature, apostle Paul still advised and commanded them on how to proceed in spiritual life. (For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 1 Corinthians 4:15; This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy... 1 Timothy 1:18)

We advise the reader not to wish to be in an institutionalized gathering that practices only worship and preaching, to be solitary, like an orphan child, and thus avoid the Body of Christ which is fitly joined together and compacted.

Let us flee from the gathering that does not practice care and submission; that does not have spiritual parents. There is the work of Satan with which he has deceived the religious world, there is not the Body of Christ.

Let us desire to be in a body where the whole Word of Christ can be fulfilled, where each member gives their part to reach the stature for which we were created, to imprint the image of Christ in us.

This post is an excerpt from the booklet "Transformed into the Image of Christ", which you can read in full, free of charge. More studies and resources for spiritual awakening are available at https://www.unmodifiedword.com.